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## INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION

PAGE NUMBER

Battle for Voroshilovgrad

1.

STAT

The successes of the Red Army in the wide encircling attack have come as the result of the use of tactical measures.

Skillful manoeuvres on the field of battle - that means to beat the enemy on the weaker and more vulnerable places, to deliver flank attacks, to carry out isolation and capture of his groups, to penetrate into his rear area, to throw quickly one's formations and units to defeat the enemy there where he does not expect it. In this connection the action of the 3rd. Guards Army in the capture of Voroshilovgrad is one of considerable interest and can be used as a training example.

This article has as its aim to show the characteristic <sup>movement of</sup> re-grouping of units, skillful manoeuvre on the field of battle, the force of blows of individual units and help ~~with~~ experience and its utilization gives the officers of the Red Army in future battles aimed at the destruction of Fascist invaders.

Situation. After the destruction of the 8th. Italian Army and the remnants of the 3rd. Rumanian Army, as well as of the German groups in the area of the middle course of the river Don, south-west of Stalingrad, the troops of the south-western front continued their successful advance into the Donets basin. The 3rd. Guards Army, ~~adv~~ advancing within the establishment of this front and having been given the task to break through into the area of Ordshonekidze and Stalino, in the beginning of February, 1943, quickly forced the ~~Donets/West~~ Western Donets in the sector Krushilovka, Davyd-Nikol'sk, and became involved in a stubborn battle for the approaches to Voroshilovgrad. The enemy tried to stop our advance with large infantry units supported by tanks and aircraft. On the 4th. of February the army was engaged in battle along the front Podgornoe (20km east of Voroshilovgrad), Lysyi, ~~Novo~~-Annovka, Masnoe, Polovka, Samsonov, Malinki Sukhodol, Popovka (the eastern) and further along the left bank of the Western Donets to Malitvenskoi.

ACSI FORM  
8 FEB. 56

13A DISSEMINATION FORM FOR INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
(CONTINUATION SHEET)

STAT

INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION

PAGE NUMBER

Battle for Voroshilovgrad

2.

On the right, parts of the 1st. Guards army attacked; on the left the 5th. Tank army. The 3rd. Guards army carried out the main thrust in the south-westerly direction of Stalino, where it was to join the 1st. Guards army.

The length of the 3rd. Guards army's front exceeded 100 km, the right flank of the army in the direction of Voroshilovgrad was facing west, in the centre of the front it faced south, and the left flank south-west.

Such a lay-out of the front had developed as a result of the forcing of the western river Donets and the quick movement of the troops of the right wing of the army in a westerly direction. For the defence of Voroshilovgrad the enemy had prepared three defended zones.

The first of these passed through Podgornoe (20 km east of Voroshilovgrad), Ogulchanskiy, <sup>Lysyi</sup> ~~Lysyi~~, Belo-Shelevaty, Nizhniy Gabin, Verkhouniy Gabin, Orlovka, and Samsonov. The second had been constructed along the river Loganchik (a tributary of the western Donets), and the third along the outskirts of Voroshilovgrad. The town itself was not only prepared for all-around defence, but also for stubborn defence.

The speed of the advance of our troops, as well as the wintery conditions, did not give the enemy the opportunity to occupy the defensive zones, and the defence, in the main, consisted of individual defended points and centres of resistance, constructed in general in inhabited places. For the gaps between defended points, in commanding heights, timber and earth defence points had been constructed, which enabled cover of the area in front of the defences by concentrated fire of infantry weapons.

In such a manner the approaches to Voroshilovgrad were sufficiently defended and covered by adequate garrisons. The uninterrupted moving forward of reserves from the depths of the defence showed that the enemy not only had the intention of retaining Voroshilovgrad, but also of throwing our troops back across the western

ACSI FORM  
8 FEB. 56

13A DISSEMINATION FORM FOR INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
(CONTINUATION SHEET)

STAT

INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION

PAGE NUMBER

Battle for Voroshilovgrad

3

Donets. Under these circumstances the 3rd. Guards army entered the battle, regardless of the fact that parts of it had been considerably weakened by preceding battles, especially among the motorized troops.

The grouping of forces on both sides is shown in Sketch 2. The comparative strength of the troops was: Battalions -1.8:1; guns 2.7:1; mortars 5:1; heavy machine guns 2:1; light machine guns 1:1 in our favor.

#### Plan of attack of the 3rd. Guards army

In these circumstances it was important for the 3rd. Guards army, without wasting time on straightening out the line of the front, and as quickly as possible, to occupy Voroshilovgrad. Similarly, the retention of Voroshilovgrad by the enemy would have a significant effect on future operations.

On the 4th. of February the formation commanders were given the following tasks: 59th. Guards Rifle Division to cover <sup>with</sup> parts of its forces the area: Novo-Lievka to Skubryi and with the main force, at dawn on the 5th. of February, to advance from the front Villa Napoleonaya. Solomennoe. in the <sup>general</sup> direction of height 1750 and to continue the thrust from height 158.6 on to Voroshilovka and in cooperation with parts of the 3rd. Guards Tank Corps and the 279th. Division to surround and destroy the enemy in the area Voroshilovka, Voloevka, and Novo-Svetlovka; further, the Division was to attack the western border of Voroshilovgrad, tying in their action with that of the 68th. Division of the 1st. Guards army. The 2nd. Guards Tank Corps, with the 5th. Guards Motorized Brigade, was to cover the zone along heights 175.8, 181.4, and 172.6, and with its main force, on the morning of the 5th. of February, to attack in the general direction across Pavlovka to height 151.3 and to carry the thrust to Voroshilovgrad. In addition, the 2nd. Guards Tank Corps was to cooperate with the 59th. Guards Rifle Division with whom it was to close the ring and destroy the enemy in the area Novo-Svetlovka. Later on the Corps was to attack the southern defenders of

ACSI FORM  
8 FEB. 56

13A DISSEMINATION FORM FOR INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
(CONTINUATION SHEET)

STAT

## INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION

PAGE NUMBER

Battle for Voroshilovgrad

1-

Voroshilovgrad towards the end of the 5th. of February, in cooperation with the 59th. Guards Rifle Division and the 279th. Rifle Division, which was attacking on the left, seize the town.

The 279th. Rifle Division, operating to the south of the 2nd. Tank Corps, was to attack from the Lysyi-Orlovka front in a northerly direction. Having seized the line Kovo-Annovka, excluding Krasnoye, the division was, together with part of the force of the 2nd. Guards Tank Corps, to exploit the success in a northwesterly direction and to attack Voroshilovgrad from the south and southwest with the task of seizing Voroshilovgrad, in cooperation with the 58th. Rifle Division and the 2nd. Guards Tank Corps, having encircled and destroyed the grouping of Germans.

Therefore, the destruction of the hostile forces and the seizure of Voroshilovgrad developed into an encircling concentric thrust.

The 14th. and 16th. Guards Rifle Division (of the 14th. Rifle Corps) advancing on the front Georievsk, Orekhovka, Semeikino, were given the task of protecting the action of the attacking groups of the army from the southwest. The troops of the central section of the army (the group of General Iuskin) operating on the front Samsonov, Podgornoe (on the western Donets), received the task of seizing Samsonov, Vodyane, al. Susholol, the house Bolon'kiy, to destroy the opposing enemy forces and to open the advance to the south.

The group of Major-General Bonakhev was to seize Samensko and continue with an attack on Stalin-Pleshchikov. The 8th. Cavalry Corps, which was at the disposal of the army commander, was concentrated in the area Ulyash in. Verkh, Stanitsa, and was ordered to be prepared to exploit the success of the troops of the central sector of the army in the general direction of Yasnyy.

The 243rd. Rifle Division moved up upwards the front, concentrating in the area Mosta, Sadka, Zelenovka. The 229th. Independent Rifle Brigade was concentrated on the area Plotina and Dubovoi. Both these formations constituted the army commander's reserve.

Thus the situation developed that, when on one hand the troops of

ACSI FORM  
8 FEB. 56

13A DISSEMINATION FORM FOR INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
(CONTINUATION SHEET)

STAT

INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
Battle for VoroshilovgradPAGE NUMBER  
5.

the central control sector of the front had been drawn into heavy battle with the enemy, but, on the other hand the speed of <sup>action</sup> ~~the battle~~ had gained decisive importance, it became impossible to think of any re-grouping. It was only practicable to make some insignificant <sup>exchanges</sup> ~~exchanges~~ within the 59th. Guards Rifle Division for the purpose of gaining time on the flanks in the area Nikolaev.

With the remaining troops of the 3rd. Guards army it was found necessary to proceed into action in the grouping which had developed as a result of the tense battles for the bridgehead on the right-hand shore of the river Severniy-Donets.

Action of the right wing of the army

The 279th. Rifle Division from the area Greki concentrated on the line (exclusive) Lysyi, Selo-Skelevatyy, and, in the night of the 5th. of February, began to advance, and with a night attack starting at four o'clock, captured Novo Annovka, and towards the end of the day, together with parts of the 2nd. Tank Corps, Gusinovka and Kommissarovka were taken.

18 kilometers remained to Voroshilovgrad. In order to achieve surprise for the attack on Voroshilovgrad the divisional commander decided to attack only at night. On the evening of the 5th. of February, parts of the division started to move, and at 12 o'clock on the 6th. of February, having disposed of the covering forces, of the enemy, reached the south eastern defences of the town and occupied the aerodrome. They became engaged in a determined battle for the town. At the same time, units of the left flank of the division occupied Rozzalinovka, Petrovka and Vasilevka, after a bitter fight.

At noon on the 6th. of February the leading units of the 2nd. Tank Corps approached the southern defences of Voroshilovgrad. During the second half of the day (6th. of February) the enemy launched several attacks on the flanks of the 279th. Rifle Division from the eastern defences of Voroshilovgrad and from the area Znamenka. Danger of being encircled developed. As soon as

ACSI FORM  
8 FEB. 5613A DISSEMINATION FORM FOR INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
(CONTINUATION SHEET)

STAT

## INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION

PAGE NUMBER

## Battle for Voroshilovgrad

6.

the main forces had captured Rozzalinovka, Petrovka and Vasilevka, the commander of the division, with part of his troops, occupied the heights 142.2, 175.9 and 198.0, and gave them the task to protect the division from the possibility of an attack from the south or east.

During the 7th., 8th., and 9th of February. parts of the 279th. Rifle Division together with those units of the 2nd. Tank Corps. which had been placed under their command, waged a bitter fight for the southern defences of Voroshilovgrad, warding off determined counter-attacks by the enemy.

At the same time. units of the 19th. Guards Rifle Division and the 2nd. Guards Tank Corps were engaged in a heavy battle in the area of Luganchik, and the 279th. Rifle Division was fighting separated from the main forces of the army. The army commander decided to send the 8th. Cavalry Corps to Voroshilovgrad, and to reinforce the 279th. Rifle Division with the 912th. Regiment of the 243 Rifle Division.

The 8th. Cavalry Corps concentrated in the area of Tel'mana towards the end of the 9th. of February, and on the following day, together with the 279th. Rifle Division began a series of unsuccessful attacks on Voro, from the south and southwest.

On the 10th. of February the corps received the order to disengage itself from the enemy in the area of Voro and to proceed in a south westerly direction towards Debal'tsevo.

The 912th. Rifle Regiment of the 243rd. Rifle Division moving towards Voro from Novo Annovka. across height 198.0, approached the town. and in the night of the 10th. of February came under the command of the 279th. Rifle Division and together with it, during the 10th. and 11th. of February conducted an intense battle for Voro.

The battle for the defences of the town proved to be a bitter one. The enemy threw in parts of the approaching units of the 335th. Infantry Division and of marching battalions and tried by all

ACSI FORM  
8 FEB. 56

13A DISSEMINATION FORM FOR INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
(CONTINUATION SHEET)

STAT

## INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION

Battle for Voroshilovgrad

PAGE NUMBER

7.

possible means to retain control of the town; battles were fought for each street and house.

Our units repulsed the counter-attacks and slowly pushed forward. By the 12th. of February, as the result of the bitter battles for the defences of the town, a difficult situation had developed for the enemy. The enemy began to lose his stability and his counter-attacks weakened noticeably.

In these days, an energetic thrust for Voroshilovgrad from the north might have led to the seizure of the town. One unit of the 58th. Rifle Division, 1st. Guards Army, operating on a broad front (up to 70 km, and its 412th. Rifle Regiment, which was to carry out the thrust from the north, operated in a sector of 45 km) was unable to give the necessary support to the right flank of the 3rd. Guards Army.

The position of the troops at the close of the 11th. of February was as follows: in the north, in the area Zemlyany, Metallist, Stalki, Vergunka, operated small forces of the 412th. Regiment, of the 58th. Rifle Division, together with partisan detachments; the 59th. Rifle Division conducted the fight in the sector from Paravosnik to Iam-enolomin. On the south eastern and south western defences of the town the battle was conducted by the 279th. Rifle division with those units of the 2nd. Guards Tank Corps which had been assigned to it, and the 912th. Rifle Regiment of the 243rd. Rifle Division. The 3th. Cavalry Corps at the close of the 11th. of February was advancing into the area Illiriya. On the other sectors of the front the battle proceeded. The narrative of these will follow later. From the experience of the battles during the approach to Voroshilovgrad the following conclusions can be drawn:

- the initial success of the 279th. Rifle Division in the areas Novo-Annovka, Gusinovka, and Kommissarovka was undoubtedly due to surprise as well as to the determination of the night attack.

- the decision of the commander of the 279th. Rifle Division to continue to advance to Voroshilovgrad through night attacks was correct in the circumstances, since a forward move of the division

ACSI FORM  
3 FEB. 56

13A DISSEMINATION FORM FOR INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
(CONTINUATION SHEET)

STAT

## INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION

## Battle for Voroshilovgrad

PAGE NUMBER

8.

during the day would have exposed it to attacks from hostile air and ground forces.

\* the change in the assignment of the 8th. Cavalry Corps was to be recognized as correct, since it could not be allowed that the corps get involved in a long battle for the city.

- in connection with the success achieved by the 279th. Rifle Division it followed that it should not have been reinforced by only one regiment of the 243rd. Division, but that the whole 243rd. Division should have been dispatched to Voroshilovgrad. The course of the battles for the town showed that the addition of one regiment did not, in the long run, influence the action of the 279th. Rifle Division.

- the delay of the 59th. Guards Rifle Division and of the parts of the 2nd. Guards Tank Corps on the intermediate boundary, the river Luganchik, resulted in breaking the schedule which had been laid down by the Army Commander for the seizure of Voroshilovgrad.

- the breakthrough of the 279th., and afterwards of the 59th. Guards Rifle Divisions to Voroshilovgrad, and then decisive actions at the outskirts of the city in connection with the move of the 8th. Cavalry Corps in the area Illiriya created favorable conditions for a decisive assault on the city.

THE ACTION OF THE 8TH. CAVALRY CORPS. In the 3rd. Guards Army Commander's initial plan the 8th. Cavalry Corps had been designated for action in the south in the general direction towards Yasny.

But since the 59th. Guards Rifle Division and the units of the 2nd. Guards Tank Corps were delayed at the boundary, the river Luganchik, and since the 279th. Rifle Division was isolated from the main forces of the army, the 8th. Cavalry Corps was given, as its next assignment, to seize, together with the 279th. Rifle Division, Voroshilovgrad, and following that, to operate in the enemy's rear with a strike at Debal'tsev.

ACSI FORM  
8 FEB. 56

13A DISSEMINATION FORM FOR INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
(CONTINUATION SECRET)

STAT

INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
Battle for VoroshilovgradPAGE NUMBER  
9.

Starting its movement on the 7th. of February, the Corps became involved in battles for Beloskelevaty and Orlov, was unable to disengage quickly, and spent 36 hours in battles for these points. Only towards the 9th. of February was it able to concentrate south of Voroshilovgrad in the area of Tel'man.

All the attempts by the Corps, together with the 279th. and the 59th. Guards Rifle Divisions to seize the town did not succeed. In the night of the 9th. and 10th. of February the Corps was to move into the area of Ekaterinovka in order to strike at Voroshilovgrad from the west, in cooperation with the 59th. Guards Rifle Division which was to attack from the east, and the 279th. Rifle Division which was to attack from the south.

However the Corps delayed the movement to the area of Ekaterinov, only starting the movement on the morning of the 10th. of February, and then only with two divisions (the 112th. and the 56th.) while the third division (the 21st.) continued to wage the battle on the southern outskirts of the town. During the approach to Davydovka, units of the Corps were unexpectedly counterattacked by an enemy force of infantry regimental size of the 335th. Infantry Division, reinforced by tanks and aircraft.

The counterattack was repulsed, but time was lost, and the enemy, bringing up parts of the 335th. Infantry Division, was able to assume the defence in the area Davydovka, and on the heights to the north of it. Further attempts by the Corps to break through to Ekaterinovka failed and it had to move to the area Tel'man and Vasil'yevka.

In the evening of the 10th. of February new orders were received, which directed the Corps to disengage itself from the battle for Voroshilovgrad and to advance in a south-westerly direction, and by the end of the 11th. of February to seize Voroshilovski, and by the end of the next day, Debal'tsevo.

Fulfilling this order, and fighting its way along the prescribed

ACSI FORM  
8 FEB. 5613A DISSEMINATION FORM FOR INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
(CONTINUATION SHEET)

INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION

PAGE NUMBER  
10.

Battle for Voroshilovgrad

STAT

ed route, the Corps, by the end of the 11th. of February reached the area of Illiriya, and on the 13th. and 14th. of February approached Debal'tsevo, where it became involved in bitter fighting with the enemy.

A study of the operation of the 8th. Cavalry Corps suggests the following remarks:

- the Corps' thrust into the depth of the enemy's rear was of great importance to the outcome of the whole battle of Voroshilovgrad as, for example, with the move of the units of the Corps to Debal'tsevo the enemy's more important communication lines were cut.

- already on the second day of the battle for Voroshilovgrad were the Corps' orders changed since its original assignment in a southerly direction did not meet the requirements. This shows the flexibility of the command in utilizing the available forces.

- the movement of the Cavalry Corps to Voroshilovgrad and the diversion of parts of its strength to the battle for the city resulted only in loss of time, strength and material. The change of the Corps' assignment - action in the direction of Debal'tsevo in the enemy communications - was more correct.

THE BATTLE IN THE CENTER OF THE MAIN FRONT. Fighting went on along the boundary Podgornoye, Krashchev a, Ogulchanskiy, Lysyy, Popovka, and Samsonov, simultaneously with the battles on the outskirts of Voroshilovgrad.

The enemy occupied Podgornoye, Krashchev a, Ogulchanskiy and Lysyy with strong garrisons and had a line of field replacements.

Settlement Belo-Okelevatyy and Orlovka were in our hands by the 4th. of February and parts of the 2nd. Guards Tank Corps, having occupied farms Engels, Krashnoye and Semeykino were able to communicate with the rear along a narrow corridor between Novo-Annovka and Popovka.

From Popovka the front turned sharply to the east and engaged the hostile garrisons in Samsonov, Vodyanoy, Mal.Sukhodol, rise Bel-

ACSI FORM  
8 FEB. 5613A DISSEMINATION FORM FOR INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
(CONTINUATION SHEET)

STAT

INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION

PAGE NUMBER

Battle for Voroshilovgrad

11.

enky, and Popovia (eastern).

Our forces were grouped as follows: from Nov. Kiyevka to the upper ravine of Sukhodol - units of the 59th. Guards Rifle Division; further south, from point 161.5 to point 181.4 the 5th. Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade; the area from the east and south-east from Mysy was occupied by units of the 2nd. Guards Tank Corps; in the area of heights 206.0, 192.4, 206.9 operated the 14th. and 61st. Guards Rifle Divisions of the 1st. Rifle Corps and the 169th. ~~Rifle~~ Tank Brigade; in the central sector of the army's front the units of the 1st. Guards Motorized Corps and General Lushin's group were disposed.

On the night of the 4/5 February the right flanking 59th Guards Rifle Division concentrated in the area dacha Kaplannaya, Bolotnennoye, and other small covering forces in the sector Podgornoye, Skubriy, which, during the night of February, undertook several unsuccessful attacks on Podgornoye and Khreshchevka.

On the 6th. of February, while the right flanking units of the 59th. Rifle Division occupied height 123.6 and Sukhodol, the covering forces which had been left behind, seized the defended points Podgornoye and Khreshchevka, destroying an important portion of the garrison. The surviving groups of Germans quickly withdrew to Popacherevo, Voroshilovka, and Popovka. Pursuing the withdrawing enemy the divisional covering forces on the same day joined the divisional main force and continued the battle along the line of the river Luganchik.

Trying to stop our advance in the direction of Voroshilovgrad, on the morning of the 5th. of February the enemy went over to the offensive by delivering simultaneous strikes on the right flank from point/ 161.5 (4 km south-west of Ogulchanskiy), on height 181.4 and in the central sector of the front from the ravine Vedotok on Popovyy, from Vodyany on Voroshilov and from Sukhodol on to Bol. Sukhodol.

In the area of height 181.4 the enemy was successful in penetrating the left flank of the 5th. Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade and to seize that height, but further advances of his were stopped.

ACSI FORM  
8 FEB. 56

13A DISSEMINATION FORM FOR INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
(CONTINUATION SHEET)

INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
Battle for Voroshilovgrad

PAGE NUMBER  
12.

STAT

In the central sector our units after bitter fighting were forced to withdraw to Lipovyy. The enemy was able, temporarily, to occupy Voroshilov and some separate groups even reached Bol. Sukhodol. By a determined counterattack further advances were denied to the Germans. Voroshilov was recaptured by our troops, and the groups of German submachine gunners which had reached Bol. Sukhodol were destroyed.

Thus it happened that the enemy's attempt to cut off, by a concentric thrust, our forces operating in the area Lysyy and Popovka did not succeed.

On the 6th. of February the enemy mounted a new counterattack against units of the 61st. Guards Rifle Division from Popovka on heights 206.9 and 218.3 in the direction of Orlovka. This counterattack was also repulsed.

On the 7th. of February the second and stronger counterattack followed which was conducted by units of the SS Division "Reich", supported by 40 tanks from Samsonov on height 218.3 and from Popovka on Orlovka. The enemy succeeded, after fierce fighting, in piercing the front and seizing Orlovka, Belo-Skelavaty, Nizh. Gabun and Verkh. Gabun. The 6th. Cavalry Corps engaged these units when on the 7th. of February it moved into the area of Voroshilovgrad.

In connection with the enemy's capture of height 181.4, Orlovka, Verkh. Gabun, Nizh. Gabun, Belo-Skelavaty, and also with his stubborn defence in the area Lysyy and Novo-Svetlovka, the units of the 2nd. Guards Tank Corps revealed themselves as hidebound fighters and could not deliver their strike on Voroshilovgrad together with the one of the 279th. Rifle Division.

With the aim of destroying the enemy, occupying height 181.4, the 243rd. Rifle ~~Division~~ <sup>Division</sup> was sent to Ogulchanskiy, but the 229th. Separate Rifle Brigade was sent to Belo-Skelavaty.

The 243rd. Rifle Division on the 6th. of February, conquering Ogulchanskiy, destroyed the enemy occupying the height 181.4 and towards the end of February 8 were on the boundary river Luganchik,

ACSI FORM  
8 FEB. 56

13A DISSEMINATION FORM FOR INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
(CONTINUATION SHEET)

INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION

PAGE NUMBER  
13.

STAT

~~Battle for Voroshilovgrad~~  
and became engaged in the battle for Voroshilovgrad, Valeyevka, and Novo Svetlovka. The 912th. Rifle Regiment of this division, as was stated before, moved in the night of the 8/9 February, through Novo Annevka to Voroshilovgrad to reinforce the 279th. Rifle Division, arriving there on the night of the 9/10 February.

Two battalions of the 229th. Separate Rifle Brigade had since the 7th. of February engaged in battle for Belo-Skelevaty and Orlovka, and two battalions had concentrated in the area Nizh. Gabun, which at that time was occupied by units of the 8th. Cavalry Corps. Until the 11th. of February inclusive, the brigade, together with other units, fought for Belo-Skelevaty and Orlovka.

On the left flank of the Army, General Monastyr's group fought for Lzensk, but unsuccessfully until the 7th. of February. From the 7th. of February, after handing over the sector to units of the 5th. Tank Army, the 10th. and 203rd. Divisions were concentrated in the area of al. Sukhodol. Further, a new group was given to General Monastyr from the 60th. Rifle Division and the 229th. Separate Rifle Brigade with the task of relieving units of the 18th. Rifle Division of the 1st. Guards Army in the north and north-west of Voroshilovgrad. Towards the end of the 11th. of February the 60th. Rifle Division and units of the 229th. Rifle Brigade moved to the right flank of the army into the area Mikulayevka-Sukhodol.

A study of the fighting for the first defensive zone had the following characteristics.

The enemy's front had been cut by a narrow corridor along which our forces moved north from the river Luganchik. On the 4th. of February this corridor, at its narrowest point - in the sector Novo Annevka - was approximately 5 km wide. On the 5th. of February this was widened to about 8 km as the result of our capture of Novo Annevka. On the 7th. of February the corridor was narrowed to 3 km when the enemy captured Orlovka and Belo-Skelevaty. Our troops operating in the area Voroshilovgrad, collective Angels, and Rasnoye, as well as units of the 8th. Cavalry Corps were supplied till t

ACSI FOR  
8 FEB. 5513A DISSEMINATION FORM FOR INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
(CONTINUATION SHEET)

STAT

## INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION

PAGE NUMBER

Battle for Voroshilovgrad

14.

the 12th. of February along this narrow corridor.

By the capture by our troops of the defended points Sukhodol, Podgornoye and Khryashchevka the units of the 59th. Guards Rifle Division were given the opportunity to reach height 123.6, that is, the vicinity of the enemy's rear, who was reorganizing in that area.

Fearing encirclement, the enemy tried to evacuate these defended localities. In this he did not succeed and most of his troops were destroyed.

The attempt to cut our supply lines by a concentric thrust was repulsed by an energetic counterattack by the timely introduction of our second echelon (the 243rd. Rifle Division) and the Reserve<sup>1</sup>, (the 229th. Rifle Brigade).

THE BATTLE ALONG THE LINE RIVER LUGANCHIL. The battle for this line lasted from the 5th. to the 11th. of February and developed as follows:

On the 5th. of February the 59th. Guards Rifle Division started an attack on Nikolayevka, height 116.0, and Sukhodol, from its position in the woods south of Naplavnaya and Bolotnennoye. By the end of the 6th. of February the division had succeeded in piercing the enemy's defences and in occupying height 123.6, and on the next day, after a determined fight, in capturing Burchak-Nikhaylovka. During the 8th. of February, the division waged battle for Nikolayevka and Lobachevo. By a decisive strike on the 9th. of February these points were overthrown. On the 10th. of February the division approached the eastern defences of Voroshilovgrad, where it became involved in the battle for that city.

Having been moved up out of the second echelon on the 6th. of February, the 243rd. Rifle Division, in the period 8th. to 12th. of February, fought for the defended localities Voroshilovka, Valeyevka, and Novo-Svetlovka.

According to the Army Commander's plan, the second Guards Tank Corps was to attack the south-eastern defences of Voroshilovgrad from the area Lysyy and height 207.0. On the 5th. of February the

ACSI FORM  
8 FEB. 56

13A DISSEMINATION FORM FOR INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
(CONTINUATION SHEET)

STAT

## INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION

Battle for Voroshilovgrad

PAGE NUMBER

15

Corps helped the units of the 279th. Rifle Division to capture Komissarovka and Pavlovka. On the following days units of the Corps became involved in the battle for Novo-Svetlovka, Mysyy and Beloselovaty and were unable to fulfil the task assigned to them. Till the end of the 11th. of February the Corps conducted the extended battle for these settlements.

From the experience of the battles for the line river Luganchik it is possible to draw the following conclusions:

The 59th. Guards Rifle Division became involved in a frontal attack for Nikolayevka and height 116.0, but ~~in~~ a more realistic decision by the Divisional Commander would have been to conduct the main thrust to the north of Nikolayevka, by passing it to the west.

The regiments of the 243rd. Rifle Division without sufficient resources (as well as the 59th. Guards Rifle Division) conducted a frontal attack on Voroshilovsk, Valeyevka, and Novo-Svetlovka, instead of by-passing Voroshilovsk from the north, and attacking that point, as well as Valeyevka, from the west.

The 2nd. Guards Tank Corps did not act sufficiently decisive and operated without initiative. Despite the opportunity presenting itself, the units were not given sufficient strength to by-pass Novo-Svetlovka from the south.

A simultaneous attack by units of the 243rd. Rifle Division from the north and by the 2nd. Guards Tank Corps from the south on the line of the river Luganchik could have led to the destruction of the enemy in that area by the 11th. of February.

THE SITUATION ON THE 12th. OF FEBRUARY AND THE 3rd. GUARD ARMY COMMANDER'S PLAN. On the 12th. of February the situation was as follows:

The 59th. Guards Rifle Division, and the 279th. Rifle Division and units of the 2nd. Guards Tank Corps fought bitterly for the defences of Voroshilovgrad. The enemy defended the central and northern sectors stubbornly but his strength was beginning to weaken noticeably.

ACSI FORM  
8 FEB. 56

13A DISSEMINATION FORM FOR INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
(CONTINUATION SHEET)

## INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION

PAGE NUMBER

Battle for Voroshilovgrad

16

STAT

The 8th. Cavalry Corps. operating in the rear of the enemy in the area of Illiriya, cut the enemy's south-western communications and made it impossible for him to send reinforcements to Voroshilovgrad.

On the line river Luganchik, in the area of Lysyy, Popovka, Orlovka, Belo-Skelevaty, as well as on the left flank of the army in the sectors Samsonov and Popovka ( on the western shore of the river Donets) fierce fighting went on.

On the right, the 1st. Guards Army with its right flank was able to advance considerable, but its left flanking 58th. Rifle Division was not able to do so.

On the left the 5th. Tank Army assumed the offensive in a south-westerly direction.

In this situation, the commander of the 3rd. Guards Army decided to attack on the morning of the 12th. of February with all the forces at his disposal with the purpose of capturing Voroshilovgrad and further, to move to Stalino and Ordzhonikidze to fulfil its assignment in that area.

THE BAS REL ION OF THE GER MANS ON THE DEFENSES OF VOROSHILOVGRAD.

On the line of the river Luganchik, units of the 243rd. Rifle Division and of the 2nd. Guards Tank Corps went over to the offensive on the morning of the 12th. of February. The 243rd. Rifle Division attacked with its main force by-passing Voroshilovsk from the north, and further south, by-passing Voroshilovsk and Valeyevka from the west. Units of the 2nd. Guards Tank Corps struck by-passing Novo Svetlovka from the south and further north by-passing it from the west.

With these concentric thrusts enemy resistance was quickly broken, the defended localities Voroshilovka, Valeyevka and Novo Svetlovka were encircled and their garrisons destroyed.

Pursuing the retreating enemy our forces reached the following positions towards the end of the 14th. of February. The 243rd. Rifle Division to above Davijdovka, and the units of the 2nd. Guards Tank

ACSI FORM  
8 FEB. 56

13A DISSEMINATION FORM FOR INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
(CONTINUATION SHEET)

STAT

## INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION

PAGE NUMBER

Battle for Voroshilovgrad

17.

Corps in the area Georgiyovs oye.

On the eastern sector of the river Luganchik line the action developed as follows: At first light on the 12th. of February, the 5th. Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade captured Lysyy destroying practically all of the German garrison. After that the brigade attacked Belo Skelevaty striking a blow at its north-western defences.

In five hours on the 12th. of February our units operating in that area (the training battalion of the 14th. Guards Rifle Division, 558th. Rifle Regiment of the 61st. Guards Rifle Division, and two battalions of the 229th Rifle Brigade, went over to a determined attack. Enemy resistance in Belo- Skelevaty and Orlovka was overcome and most of the garrison destroyed.

At the same time units of the 14th. Guards Rifle Division captured Lopovka and units of the 14th. Rifle Corps moved quickly in a south-westerly direction. Towards the end of the 14th. February our troops had reached the following positions: The 14th. Guards Rifle Division in the area Kutugino, the 61st. Guards Rifle Division on the outskirts of Blafirovka, in the name of Karl Liebknecht and the 50th. Guards Rifle Division in the area Pervosvanovka and Andreyovka.

The 1st. Guards Mechanized Corps, having handed over its sector to the 226 Rifle Division moved towards the end of the 14th. of February to the settlement (in the name of Voroshilov) and units of the 2nd. Tank Corps into the area north of Putzerbovka; the 226th. and 203rd. Rifle Divisions remained on the line Samsonov-Lopovka (the eastern).

General Bonalhov's group, attacking to the north of Voroshilovgrad, captured, after bitter fighting, towards the end of the 14th. of February, Liman, Tsvetnye and Rasnyy.

In this manner were the German fascist soldiers descending Voroshilovgrad from the south-east destroyed and only isolated groups withdrew quickly in a westerly and south westerly direction.

The daring manoeuvre by units of the 243rd. Rifle Division and of the 2nd. Guards Tank Corps along the line of the river Laganchik

MSI FORM  
8 FEB. 56

13A DISSEMINATION FORM FOR INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
(CONTINUATION SHEET)

STAT

## INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION

PAGE NUMBER

Battle for Voroshilovgrad

18.

led to the destruction of the enemy and our troops in that sector were given the opportunity of almost unopposed freedom of movement in a south-westerly direction.

Also to be noted is the well-organized attack by units of the 5th. Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade which led to the capture of the enemy-held settled localities Lysyy and Belo-Skelevaty.

THE ASSAULT ON AND CAPTURE OF VOROSHILOVGRAD. Simultaneous with the destruction of the German troops defending the south-eastern approaches to Voroshilovgrad, bitter fighting took place for the defenses of the city. During these battles the preparations for the final assault, which had been set for the morning of the 14th. of February, were carried out.

Assault groups were organized within regiments; artillery and mortars were brought closer forward and many were attached to the infantry; the sappers cleared passages through the mine fields.

At first light on the 14th. of February our units started the general attack on the town. The 59th. Guards Rifle Division broke through the defenses in the south-eastern sector of the town and broke through to the center of the town. The attack of the 279th. Rifle Division and of its attached 912th. Rifle Regiment of the 243rd Rifle Division, as well as the attack by units of the 2nd. Tank ~~Corps~~ Corps was also successful.

By the end of the 14th. of February the town was entirely in our hands, and the remaining remnants of the German troops were in full flight in a westerly or north-westerly direction.

As reason for the success of our troops in the capture of Voroshilovgrad can be given the energetic assault and the cutting of the communication lines south-west of the town. In this connection an important role was played by the 8th. Cavalry Corps in its activity in the depth of the enemy's rear in the area of Debal'tsevo.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

1. The battles of the 3rd. Guards Army can be characterized as battles of manoeuvre. As examples of this can be quoted: the capture

ACSI FORM  
8 FEB. 5613A DISSEMINATION FORM FOR INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
(CONTINUATION SHEET)

INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION

PAGE NUMBER

Battle for Voroshilovgrad

19

STAT

by the 279th. Rifle Division of Novo Annovka and its quick subsequent movement to Voroshilovgrad; the manoeuvre of the main force of the 59th. Guards Rifle Division from the area Nov. Kiyevka to Naplanaya dacha - Bolotnennoye; the movement of the 91st. Rifle Regiment of the 243rd. Rifle Division into the area of Voroshilovgrad; the capture of enemy units by the 249th. Rifle Division in cooperation with units of the 2nd. Guards Tank Corps on the line river Luganchik; the movement of the 8th. Cavalry Corps into the depth of the enemy's rear; the manoeuvre of General Konakhov's group.

2. Under conditions of very fluid warfare the concentration of the attacking troops, particularly the movement of the mobile ~~troops~~ larger units, and the movement of troops in separate directions can not be at uniform speed. Mobile large units and combat teams of the army will have greater mobility, this was shown by the experience of the 3rd. Guards army.

During the days of fighting the action of the 3rd. Guards Army was conducted in many sectors, not connected with the general line of the front, simultaneously and were even echeloned in depth. Such a dispersion of combat activity is one of the particular characteristics of the modern mobile operations.

3. The general conception of the capture of Voroshilovgrad was built up on daring manoeuvre and concentric thrust, which utilized mobility and fast exploitation of combat action.

4. The successful action of the 279th. Rifle Division during the nine days in which they were cut off and their fight with a superior enemy can be quoted as an example of realistic good administration and conduct of battle by the command group and of all the officers.

5. The thrust by the 8th. Cavalry Corps into the depth of the enemy's rear helped significantly in the destruction of the hostile forces grouped around Voroshilovgrad and the capture of the city.

6. The successful assault on Voroshilovgrad was made possible by the movement of the main forces of the Army to the south and the

## INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION

PAGE NUMBER

Battle for Voroshilovgrad

20.

south-west of the city, the movement of General Konakhov's group into the area to the north of the town as well as the careful preparation of the subunits and their independent action in the battle for a large populated place.

ANSI FORM  
8 FEB. 5613A DISSEMINATION FORM FOR INTELLIGENCE TRANSLATION  
(CONTINUATION SHEET)